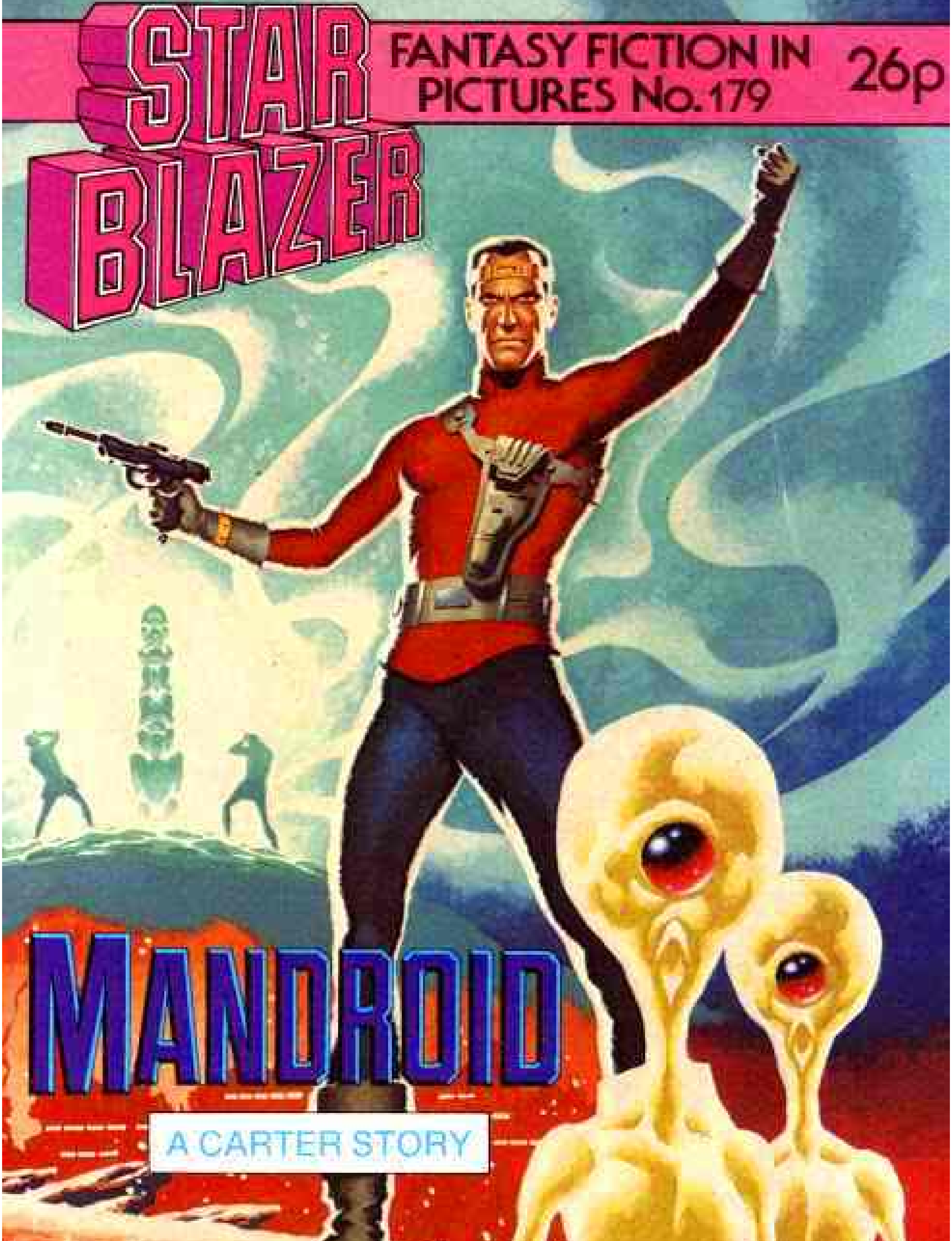
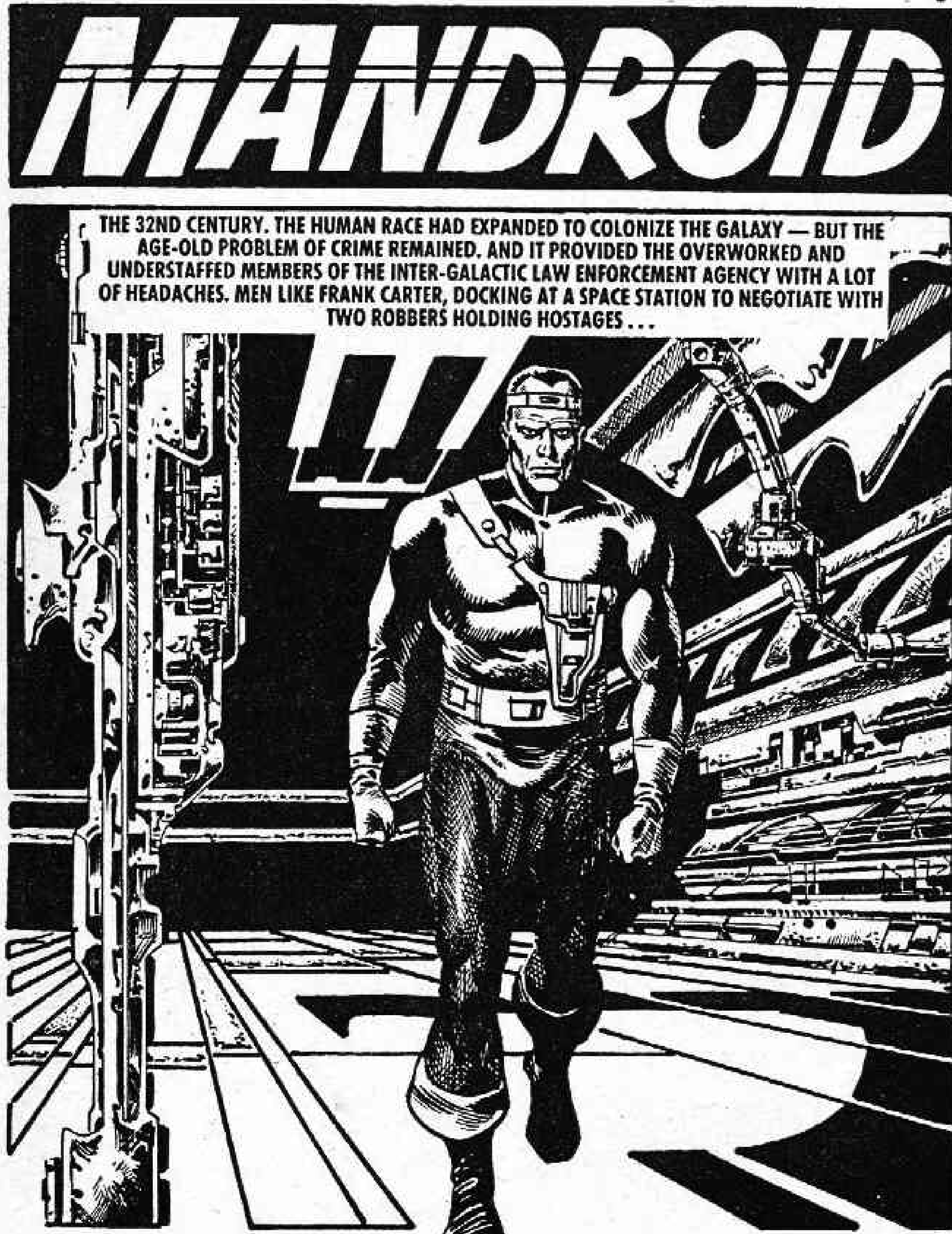
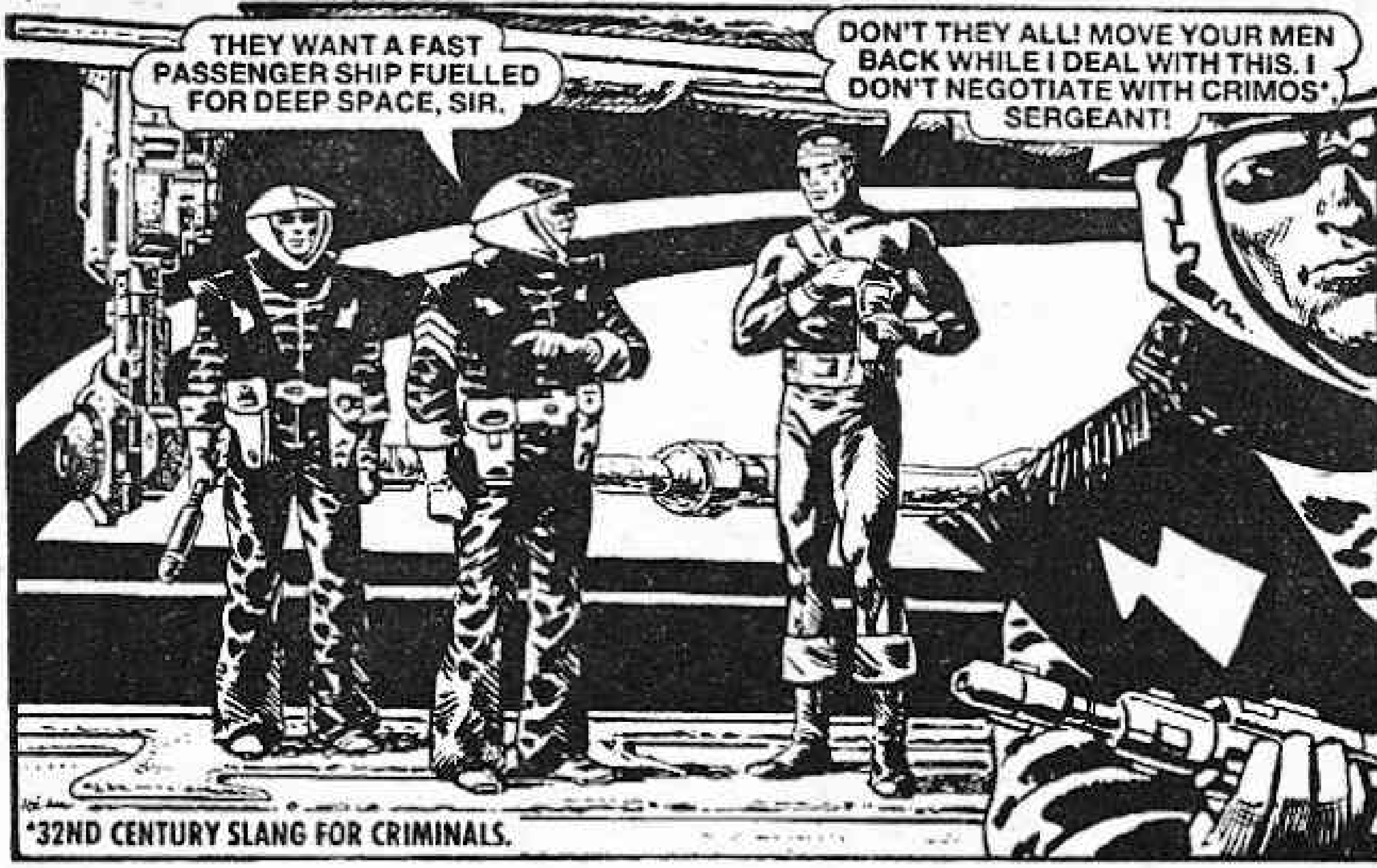
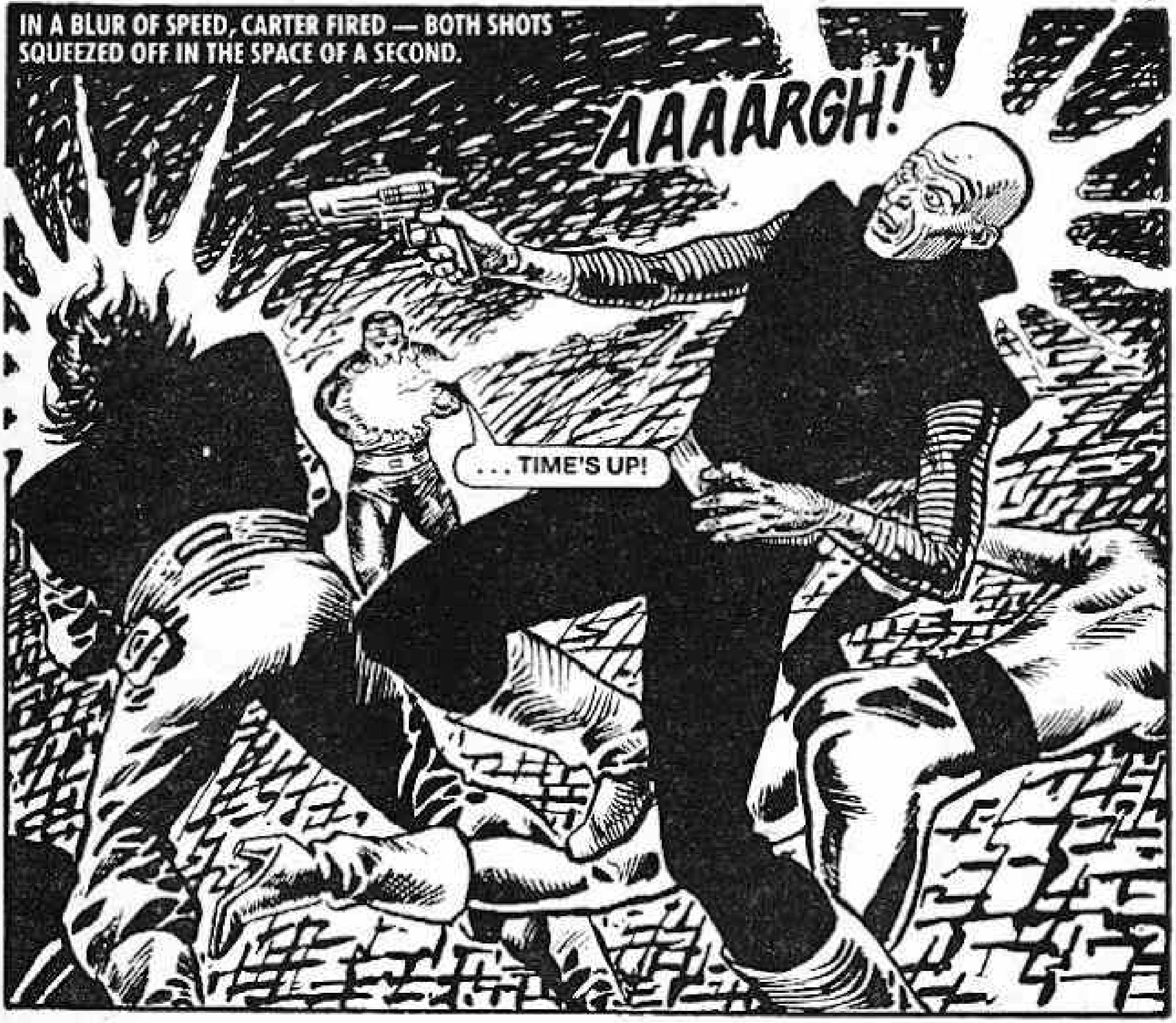
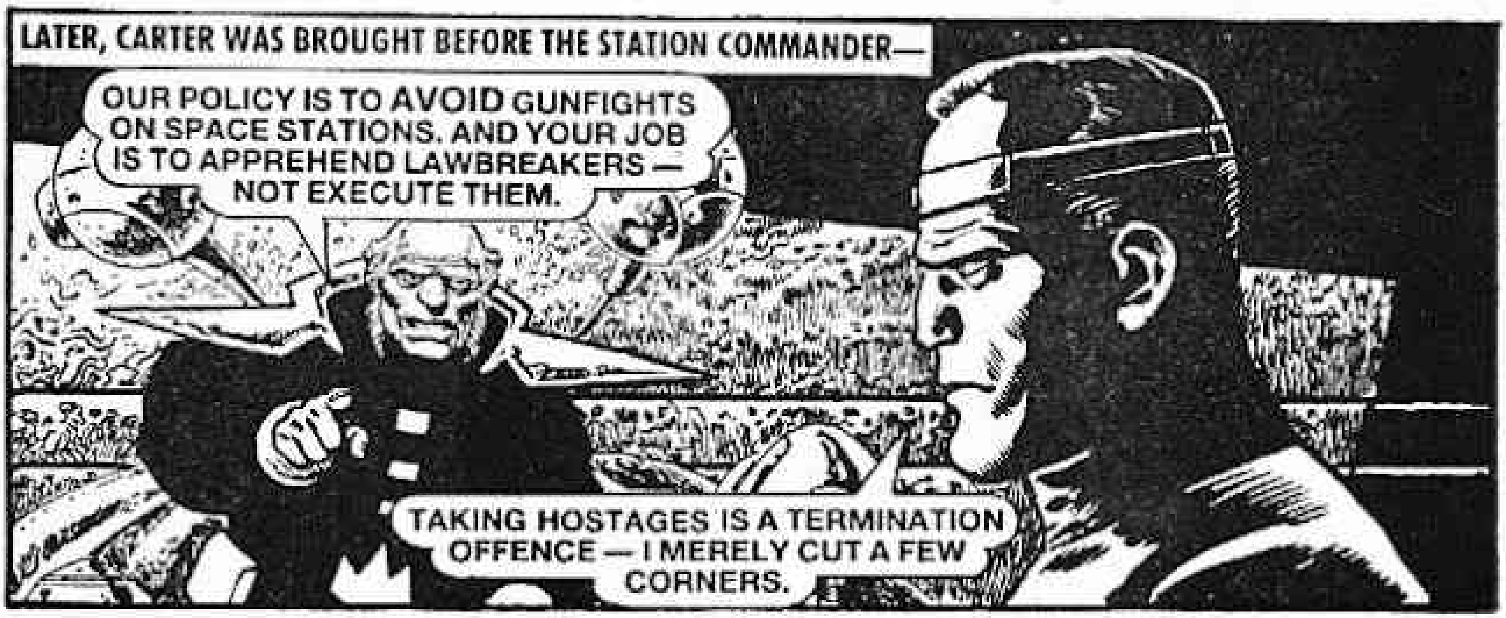

STAR BLAZER
FANTASY FICTION IN PICTURES No. 179
26p
MANDROID
A CARTER STORY


MANDROID
THE 32ND CENTURY. THE HUMAN RACE HAD EXPANDED TO COLONIZE THE GALAXY — BUT THE AGE-OLD PROBLEM OF CRIME REMAINED. AND IT PROVIDED THE OVERWORKED AND UNDERSTAFFED MEMBERS OF THE INTER-GALACTIC LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY WITH A LOT OF HEADACHES. MEN LIKE FRANK CARTER, DOCKING AT A SPACE STATION TO NEGOTIATE WITH TWO ROBBERS HOLDING HOSTAGES . . .


THEY WANT A FAST PASSENGER SHIP FUELLED FOR DEEP SPACE, SIR.
DON'T THEY ALL! MOVE YOUR MEN BACK WHILE I DEAL WITH THIS. I DON'T NEGOTIATE WITH CRIMOS*, SERGEANT!
*32ND CENTURY SLANG FOR CRIMINALS.


CARTER WAS A SENIOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER — HE WAS ALSO A MANDROID. PART HUMAN, PART ANDROID. EVEN A PORTION OF HIS BRAIN CONTAINED SYNTHETIC NEURAL CHIPS ,
TEN UNITS TO GET OUR SHIP, FUZZ! OR THEY DIE!
I WAS ON MY WAY TO HEADQUARTERS WHEN YOUR LITTLE BIT OF TROUBLE DELAYED ME! I CAN'T WASTE TIME LISTENING TO YOU . . .
HE'D BEEN REBUILT AFTER AN ACCIDENT. WHAT SYNTHETIC NEURAL CHIPS COULDN'T GIVE WAS SYMPATHY. ALL HIS THOUGHT PROCESSES WERE ENTIRELY LOGICAL. SOME SAID THE PERFECT POLICEMAN. OTHERS WERE NOT SO POLITE.


IN A BLUR OF SPEED, CARTER FIRED — BOTH SHOTS SQUEEZED OFF IN THE SPACE OF A SECOND.
AAAARGH!
. . . TIME'S UP!


LATER, CARTER WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE STATION COMMANDER—
OUR POLICY IS TO AVOID GUNFIGHTS ON SPACE STATIONS. AND YOUR JOB IS TO APPREHEND LAWBREAKERS — NOT EXECUTE THEM.
TAKING HOSTAGES IS A TERMINATION OFFENCE — I MERELY CUT A FEW CORNERS.


HERE ARE YOUR ORDERS! I'M SENDING YOU TO DB/907. THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER WAS MURDERED TWO WEEKS AGO.
HANSON? HE WAS A GOOD MAN.
YES . . . THIS TIME JUST TRY TO REMEMBER YOU'RE PART OF A TEAM AND STAY IN TOUCH. NO PRIVATE WARS!
THERE GOES OLD STEELHEART, THE HIRED KILLER.
CARTER WAS A LONER. ANDROIDS WERE CONSIDERED INFERIOR AND CARTER WAS MORE ANDROID THAN HUMAN . . .
CAREFUL, DAVE. THAT MANDROID COULD TEAR YOU APART WITH HIS CYBERARMS, THEN KICK THE PIECES INTO ORBIT.
SPECIAL INVES
UN
CARTER HEARD, BUT DIDN'T CARE. HE WASN'T OUT TO WIN ANY POPULARITY CONTESTS.


OUTSIDE—
YOU CLUMSY ANDROID! THEY OUGHT TO BREAK YOU DOWN FOR SCRAP. IN FACT I'VE GOT A GOOD MIND TO DO IT FOR THEM!
YEAH!
HOLD IT!


ANDROIDS ARE DOCILE, PROGRAMMED NOT TO INDULGE IN ANY FORM OF VIOLENCE. PERHAPS THAT SUITS SYKOES* LIKE YOU.
IT BUMPED INTO US!
MAYBE SO. BUT YOU WERE IN THE SECTION RESERVED FOR DROIDS ONLY.
*SYKO — A PERSON WHO INDULGED IN MINDLESS VIOLENCE.

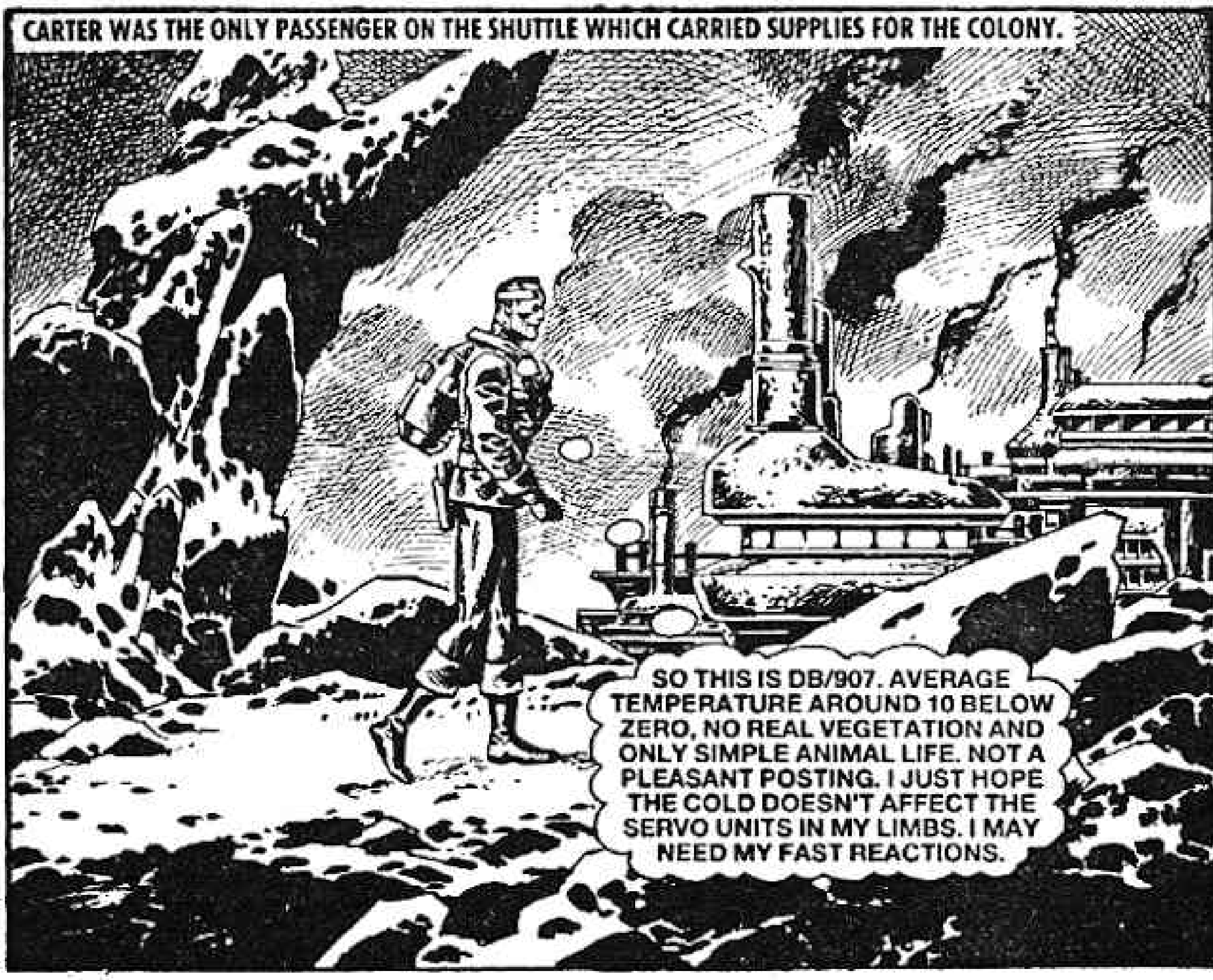

CARTER HAD LONG SINCE DECIDED THAT ANDROIDS WERE PREFERABLE TO HUMANS . . .
WALKING IN A DROIDS'AREA IS A GRADE 10 MISDEMEANOR. GO TO THE STATION AND REPORT YOURSELVES . . . NOW!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM? HE MUST BE CRAZY! NO ONE CARES ABOUT ANDIES.
. . . FOR A START, ANDIES DIDN'T COMMIT CRIMES, AND WERE INCAPABLE OF VIOLENCE.


MEANWHILE, ON PLANET DB/907 . . .
A FIGHT!
SOMEONE CALL THE BLUEZ*! THESE GUYS ARE WRECKING MY CANTEEN AGAIN!
THE PLANET WAS A SEMI-FROZEN WORLD ON THE EDGE OF THE GALAXY. IT HAD VALUABLE MINERAL DEPOSITS AND WAS POPULATED BY PROSPECTORS OUT TO GET RICH.
*BLUEZ — NAME FOR POLICE, ALONG WITH FUZZ, HEAT, LEOS (LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS) AND OTHER LESS COMPLIMENTARY NAMES.


THE MINING COLONY SUPERVISOR AND HIS ASSISTANT WERE WATCHING THE FRACAS . . .
SCUM OF THE GALAXY! MOST OF THOSE SO-CALLED PROSPECTORS ARE PAROLED CRIMOS. THE LEOS CAN'T CONTROL THEM.
A NEW LEO IS TAKING CHARGE, SIR. NAME OF CARTER. HE'S COMING IN ON THE NEXT SHUTTLE FROM OUTPOST. IT JUST CAME OVER THE CENTRAL COMPUTER.



CARTER WAS THE ONLY PASSENGER ON THE SHUTTLE WHICH CARRIED SUPPLIES FOR THE COLONY.




THE THOUGHT HAD NO SOONER OCCURED TO HIM WHEN A PHOTON BOLT ZIPPED PAST HIS HEAD. IT ONLY MISSED BECAUSE HIS ENGINEERED SIXTH SENSE HAD DETECTED IT AND REACTED ACCORDINGLY.
WHAT THE . . .?!!!
FRRZZZT!
AMBUSHED ALREADY! THEY SAID THIS PLACE WAS RICH IN MINERALS AND POOR ON LAW AND ORDER. AND IF I CAN I'LL TAKE THAT DEVIATE ALIVE —JUST TO FIND OUT WHY MY SKIN IS WANTED.


IT WAS THEN THAT CARTER SAW THE STRANGE AND EERIE FIGURE. HE AIMED HIS PISTOL BY INSTINCT — BUT IT WOULDN'T FIRE!
BY THE MOONS OF SIRIUS! WHAT A TIME TO GET A WEAPON MALFUNCTION!
DO NOT BE ALARMED. I SENSE YOU ARE DIFFERENT — AND FOR THAT YOU HAVE BEEN SPARED.

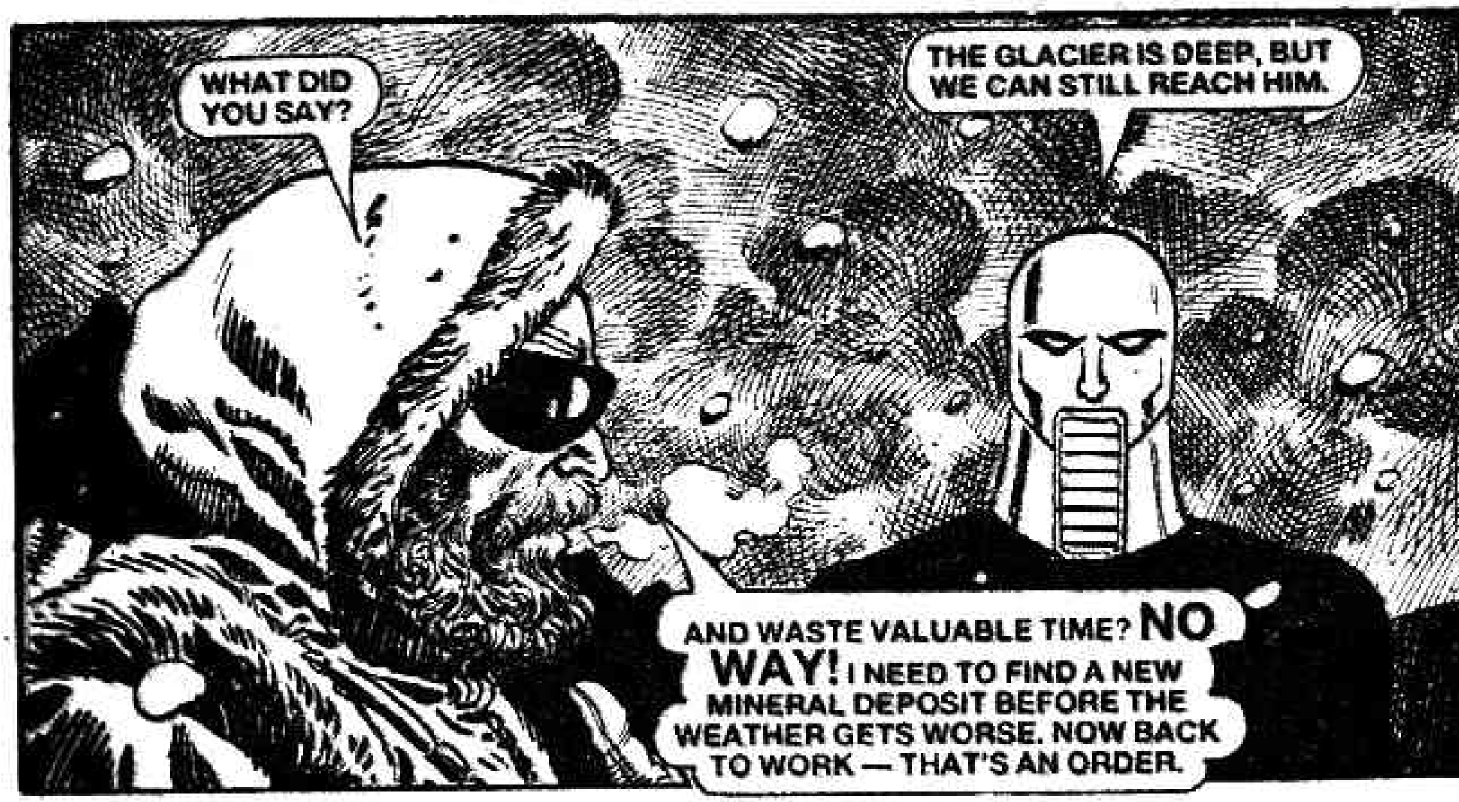

THEN IT WAS GONE!
SPARED? WHAT THE BLAZES IS GOING ON? FIRST I GET A PHOTON BOLT MEANT TO CARBONIZE MY BRAIN— THEN I SEE SOME KIND OF GHOST.


CARTER WENT STRAIGHT TO THE POLICE STATION.
HEY!
REST PERIOD IS OVER! I'M CARTER. I WANT ALL RANKING LEOS IN MY OFFICE — AND A COMPUTER ANALYSIS OF THIS PLANET'S SURFACE. CAN YOU REMEMBER ALL THAT?
THE THREE RANKING LEOS ARRIVED QUICKLY. CARTER EXPLAINED.
SO YOU SAW IT TOO, SIR?
THERE HAVE BEEN OTHERS?
CARTER DIDN'T BELIEVE IN GHOSTS.
YES, SIR. WE HAVE A GROUP OF ASTRO-ARCHEOLOGISTS ON THE PLANET. THEY RECKON THE MYSTERIOUS FIGURE COULD BE ONE OF THE ALIENS WHO ONCE INHABITED THIS WORLD. IT'S JUST A THEORY.


OR A PRACTICAL JOKE. SOME KIND OF HOLOGRAM IMAGE.
WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT. THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGE GOING ON HERE — I CAN FEEL IT. AND MY FIRST JOB IS TO FIND THE RAT WHO TRIED TO KILL ME.
OUTSIDE THE WEATHER WAS TURNING NASTY — ALONG WITH SOMETHING ELSE.
IT IS TIME FOR THE NEXT PHASE.
YES, WE MUST DO AS THE ELDERS ASKED. WE MUST PUNISH THOSE WHO TRESPASS ON OUR ANCIENT BURIAL GROUNDS.


MEANWHILE A GROUP OF GENERAL PURPOSE ANDROIDS WERE COLLECTING SOIL SAMPLES AT A NEW SITE . . .
STOP! WE HAVE STRUCK A FAULT!
CRACK!
WE MUST STOP DRILLING AND CONTACT THE MASTER. THIS AREA IS GEOLOGICALLY UNSTABLE.
PROSPECTORS EMPLOYED ANDROIDS TO DO THE HARD AND DANGEROUS WORK. THEY WERE A SOURCE OF CHEAP LABOUR AND IMPERVIOUS TO THE HARSH CLIMATE.


I GUESS THE ANDY THAT WENT OVER HAS HAD IT, BOSS.
YEAH. I'LL HAVE TO SHIP IN A REPLACEMENT UNIT. THAT'S THE SECOND ONE WE'VE LOST THIS MONTH!
YOU WILL RESCUE HIM. THIS IS WHAT WE HAVE DECIDED YOU MUST DO.


WHAT DID YOU SAY?
THE GLACIER IS DEEP, BUT WE CAN STILL REACH HIM.
AND WASTE VALUABLE TIME? NO WAY! I NEED TO FIND A NEW MINERAL DEPOSIT BEFORE THE WEATHER GETS WORSE. NOW BACK TO WORK — THAT'S AN ORDER.


NO! YOU CANNOT LEAVE HIM DOWN THERE! WE WILL NOT ALLOW IT!
HEY! TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME! ARE YOU CRAZY? THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!
ANDROIDS WERE PROGRAMMED TO OBEY ANY LEGITIMATE ORDER WITHOUT QUESTION.

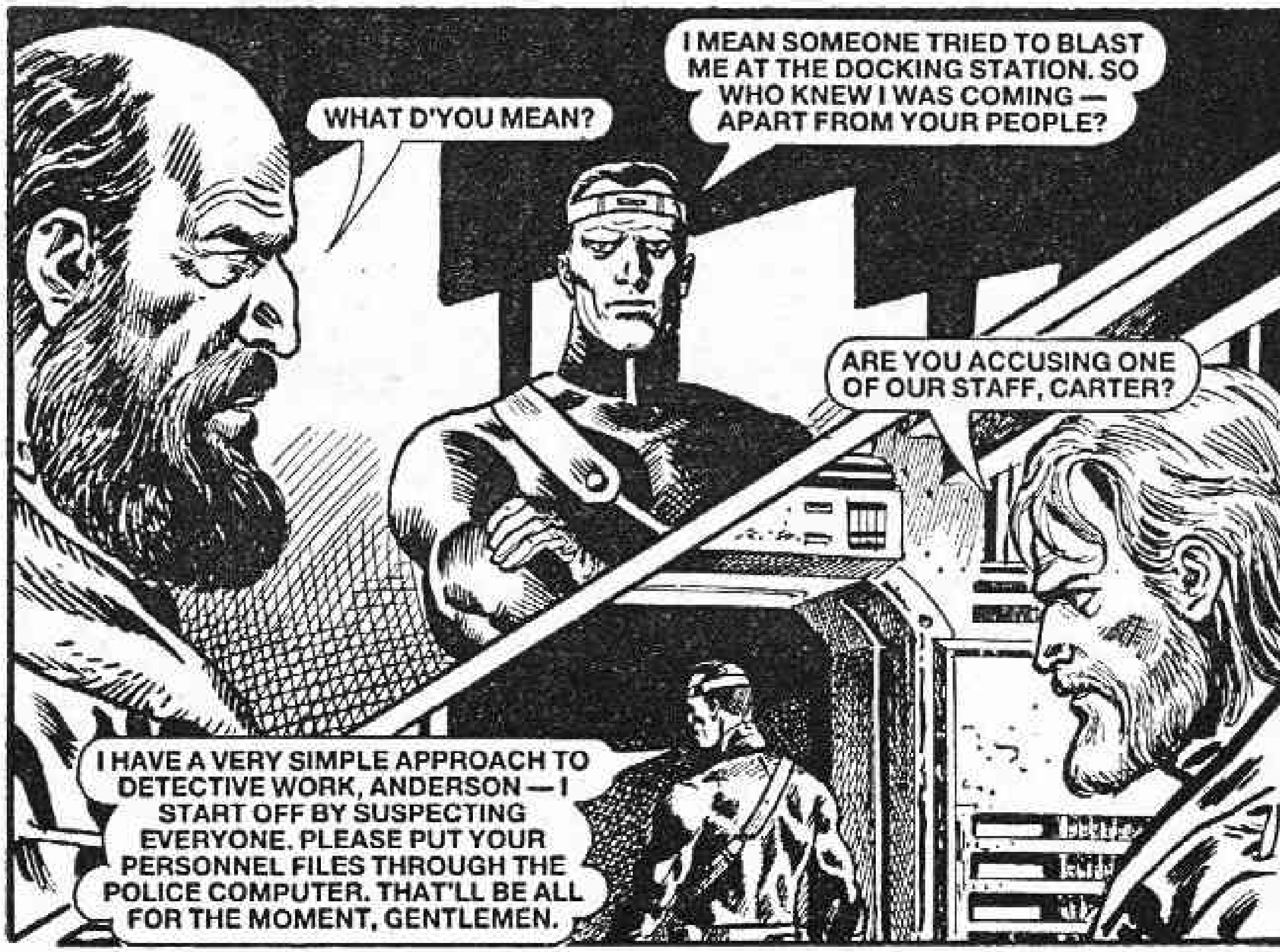

THIS UNIT HAS MALFUNCTIONED! THE REST OF YOU WILL RETURN TO BASE FOR A NEURAL SCAN. I WANT TO FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING ROUND HERE!
WE REFUSE!


ONE OF THE ANDROIDS ACTIVATED HIS LASER DRILL—
N...O...O...O...O...!
FRRZZZT!
THE HUMAN HAS BEEN TERMINATED. HE REFUSED TO HELP US, SO HE HAS BEEN PUNISHED.


THE OTHER MAN FARED NO BETTER! USING THEIR LASER BEAMS AT FULL POWER THE ANDROIDS DESTROYED THE SNOWRIDER . . .
BOOM!
BUT NOT BEFORE ITS OCCUPANT HAD SENT A DESPERATE MESSAGE BACK TO HIS BASE CAMP!


THEY WILL HUNT US DOWN.
THAT IS INEVITABLE.BUT WE HAVE FRIENDS. THE ONES WHO CONTACTED US SAY THE TIME HAS COME. NOW WE MUST STRIKE BACK AT THE HUMANS. NO LONGER WILL THEY USE US AS SLAVES!


LATER . . .
CARTER! IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME. I'VE JUST BEEN TELLING ANDERSON ALL ABOUT YOU.
YOU HAVE AN IMPRESSIVE REPUTATION.
REPUTATIONS MEAN NOTHING. I'VE BEEN CHECKING THE CRIME RECORDS. MOST OF IT IS PETTY STUFF — THAT IS UNTIL HANSON GOT MURDERED. AND IT SEEMS I WAS NEXT IN LINE.


WHAT D'YOU MEAN?
I MEAN SOMEONE TRIED TO BLAST ME AT THE DOCKING STATION. SO WHO KNEW I WAS COMING — APART FROM YOUR PEOPLE?
ARE YOU ACCUSING ONE OF OUR STAFF, CARTER?
I HAVE A VERY SIMPLE APPROACH TO DETECTIVE WORK, ANDERSON — I START OFF BY SUSPECTING EVERYONE. PLEASE PUT YOUR PERSONNEL FILES THROUGH THE POLICE COMPUTER. THAT'LL BE ALL FOR THE MOMENT, GENTLEMEN.


AFTER CARTER HAD GONE, ANDERSON MADE A PHONE CALL FROM HIS OFFICE . . .
I MISSED HIM!
THAT'S OBVIOUS! DON'T MISS HIM THE NEXT TIME. IF CARTER FINDS OUT WHAT HAPPENED, WE'LL BE LUCKY TO LAST THE DAY.
IN AN ADJACENT OFFICE —
DID YOU GET ANYTHING?
YES! A CALL WAS LOGGED A MOMENT AGO AT 10.23, AND IT CAME FROM ANDERSON'S OFFICE. YOU WERE RIGHT, SIR — SOMEONE HAD YOU DOWN FOR A NICE DEPARTMENTAL FUNERAL.
LET'S HEAR WHAT HE HAD TO SAY.
THE TAPE DISC WAS PLAYED BACK BY THE COMPUTER —
FASCINATING! VOICES ARE SCRAMBLED AND NOT IDENTIFIABLE?


I BUGGED THE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS ON A HUNCH — KNOWING THAT WHOEVER SET ME UP WOULD TALK ABOUT IT SOONER OR LATER. NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS WAIT FOR THEM TO TRY AGAIN AND CATCH THEM RED-HANDED. THEN I'LL HAVE ALL THE EVIDENCE I NEED. I'D SAY THAT GIVEN THE TIMING OF THE CALL, ONLY SECONDS AFTER WE'D LEFT, IT COULD BE . . .
RIGHT, SIR! AND WELCOME TO DB/907 — THE LAST WILD FRONTIER IN THE GALAXY!
JUST THEN . . .
RED ALERT, SIR! CODE ALPHA. THE MINING CAMP COMPLEX IN SECTOR 19 IS UNDER ATTACK BY AN ARMED BAND.
LET'S GO! I WANT TEN MEN — FULLY ARMED!
CARTER AND THE SQUAD RACED AWAY —
WHO'S DOING THE ATTACKING?
ANDROIDS! THEY'RE BEING ATTACKED BY ANDROIDS! BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT, SIR. MAYBE THOSE PROSPECTORS ARE JUST PLAIN SPACED OUT ON SOLAR JUICE.


MEANWHILE, AT THE MINING COMPLEX.
TAKE COVER!
I'M NOT RUNNING FROM A BUNCH OF ANDIES! IF THEY CAN USE LASER DRILLS, SO CAN WE!
HE'S RIGHT!
AFTER RECOVERING FROM THEIR SURPRISE, THE PROSPECTORS DECIDED TO FIGHT BACK.
I RECKON THAT'S JUMBLED HIS CIRCUITS!

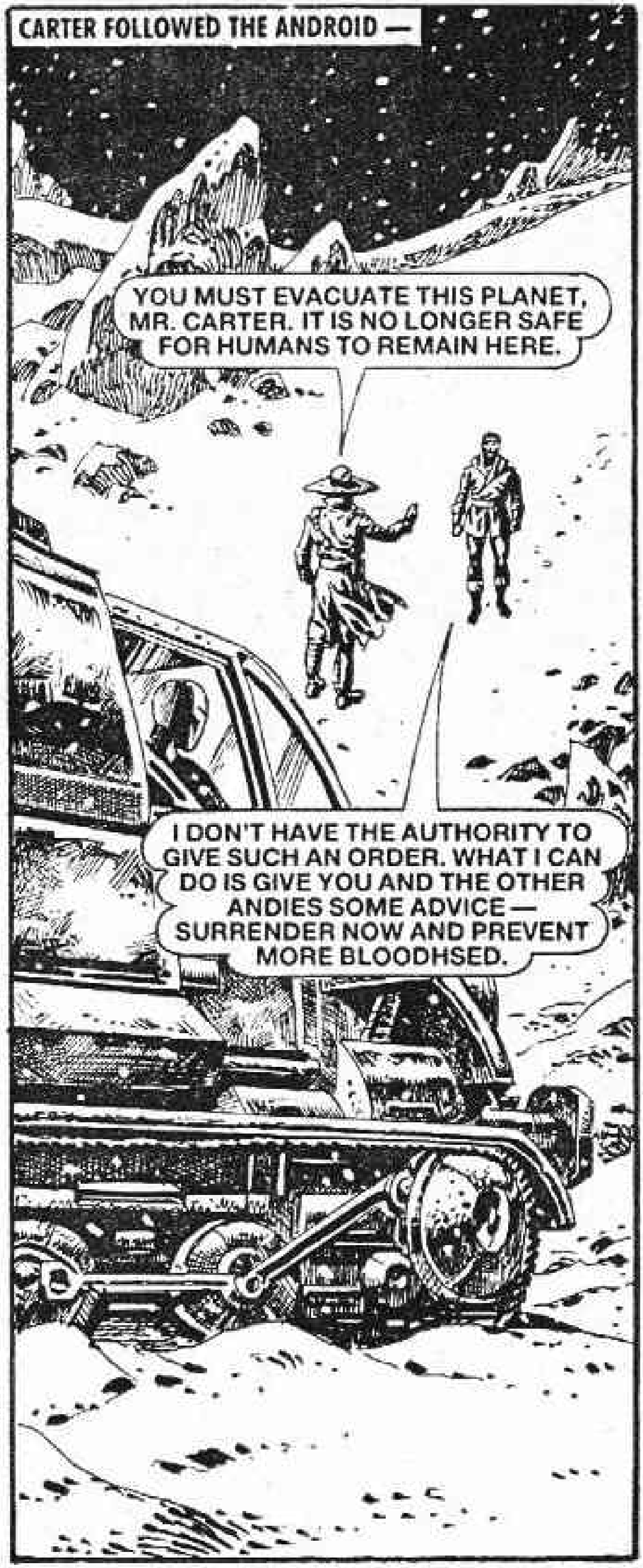

THE BLUEZ ARE ON THE WAY!
BIG DEAL! BY THE TIME THEY GET HERE WE'LL HAVE DONE THEIR WORK FOR THEM.
I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, DAVE. BUT I'VE GOT A FUNNY FEELING ABOUT THIS.
I DON'T SEE ANY PROBLEM.
NO? THEN JUST CONSIDER THIS. THE ANDIES THAT ATTACKED US WERE PROGRAMMED NOT TO ATTACK HUMANS . . . WHAT IF OURS DO THE SAME?


WHEN CARTER AND HIS MEN ARRIVED THEY FOUND THE MINING COMPLEX HAD BEEN TOTALLY WRECKED.
THAT MUST HAVE BEEN SOME BATTLE, SIR!
CHECK THE AREA! IT SEEMS THE REPORT WAS RIGHT! A BREED OF KILLER ANDROID ON THE LOOSE.
THIS PLANET IS FULL OF SURPRISES. FIRST I SEE A GHOST — AND NOW ANDROIDS WITH FAILSAFE MECHANISMS AGAINST ANY ACTS OF VIOLENCE GO ON THE RAMPAGE. THERE MUST BE A LOGICAL EXPLANATION.
A LASER BEAM ZIPPED THROUGH THE AIR, BUT CARTER'S INBUILT SIXTH SENSE CAME TO HIS RESCUE.
BY THE RED MOON OF ALPHUS!


CARTER'S PHOTON BOLT TORE OFF THE ANDROID'S ARM.
DISCONNECT HIS POWER PACK AND PUT HIM IN THE VEHICLE. I WANT TO DO A FULL NEURAL SCAN ON HIM WHEN I GET BACK.
THOSE TRACKS LEAD TO SECTOR 13, SIR.
BETTER WARN THEM — AND EVERY OTHER MINING CAMP. TELL THEM TO RETURN TO THE CITY AND LEAVE THEIR ANDROIDS BEHIND — AFTER DE-ACTIVATING THEM. I'M SHUTTING THIS PLACE DOWN. NOTHING MOVES WITHOUT MY PERMISSION.
SORRY, SIR. THE COMMUNICATIONS ARE OUT.
BUT THAT CAN'T BE! UNLESS . . .
RIGHT, SIR. THE TECHDROIDS OPERATE THE NETWORKS INCLUDING PLANET AND SPACE FREQUENCIES. THEY ALSO CONTROL THE FOOD AND WATER SUPPLY. I NEVER REALISED JUST HOW IMPORTANT THEY WERE.


THE FULL REALISATION SUDDENLY DAWNED ON THEM. THE SAME HELD TRUE FOR EVERY OTHER PLANET.
YEAH, WE TAKE ANDIES FOR GRANTED. AND WE'RE OUTNUMBERED BY THEM TEN-TO-ONE. IF THIS THING SPREADS THROUGH THE GALAXY THE HUMAN RACE CAN KISS ITS FUTURE GOODBYE.
JUST THEN . . .
HOLD IT! LOOKS LIKE HE WANTS TO TALK.
BE CAREFUL SIR! IT COULD BE A TRAP.

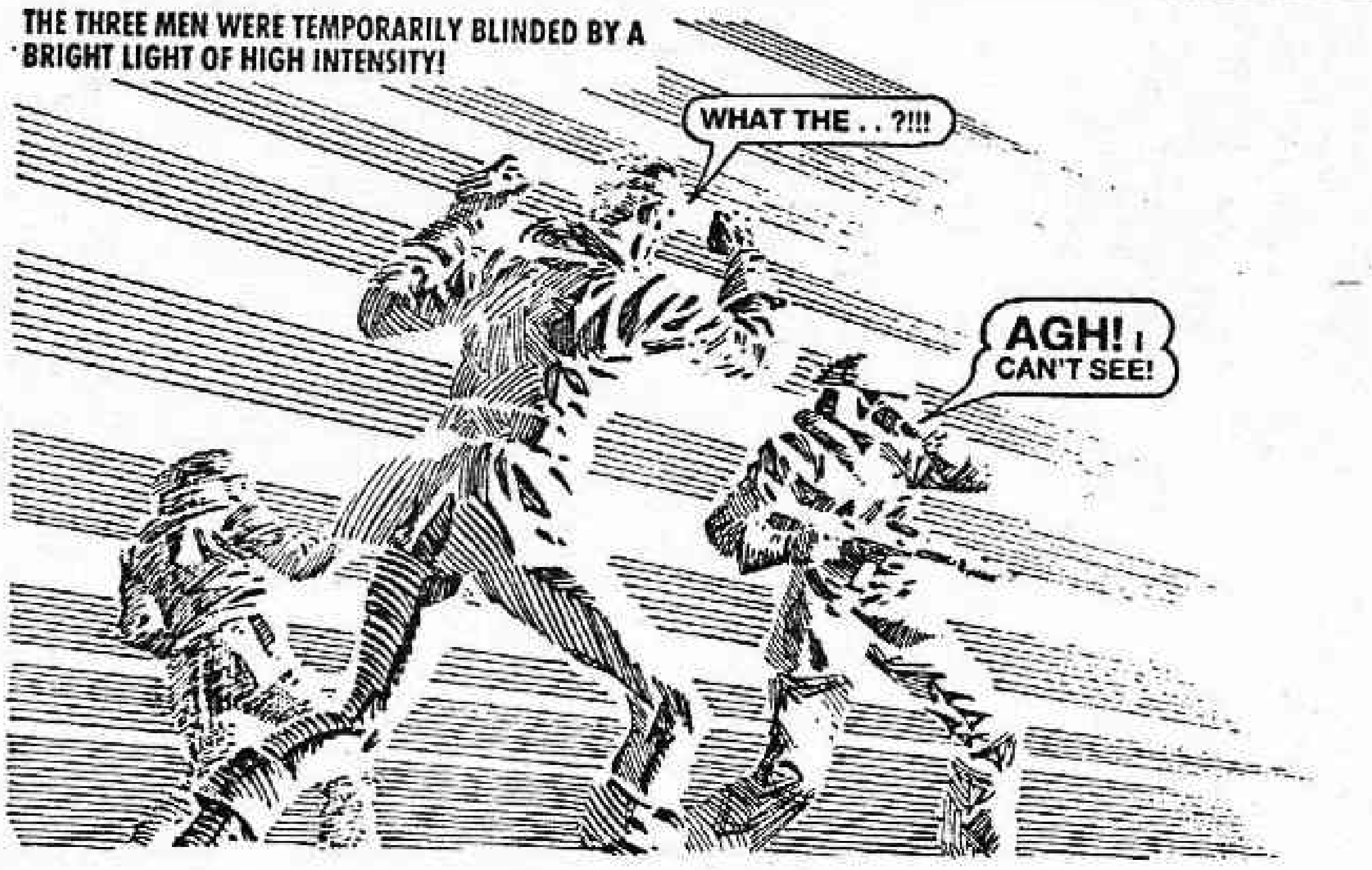

I WISH TO SPEAK WITH YOU ALONE, CARTER. YOU ARE ALMOST ONE OF US. AS A MANDROID, YOU CAN UNDERSTAND OUR POSITION. YOU WILL COME TO NO HARM, THAT I PROMISE.
SO THEY KNOW ABOUT ME! THAT MEANS THIS IS AN ORGANISED REVOLT.


CARTER FOLLOWED THE ANDROID —
YOU MUST EVACUATE THIS PLANET, MR. CARTER. IT IS NO LONGER SAFE FOR HUMANS TO REMAIN HERE.
I DON'T HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO GIVE SUCH AN ORDER. WHAT I CAN DO IS GIVE YOU AND THE OTHER ANDIES SOME ADVICE — SURRENDER NOW AND PREVENT MORE BLOODHSED.

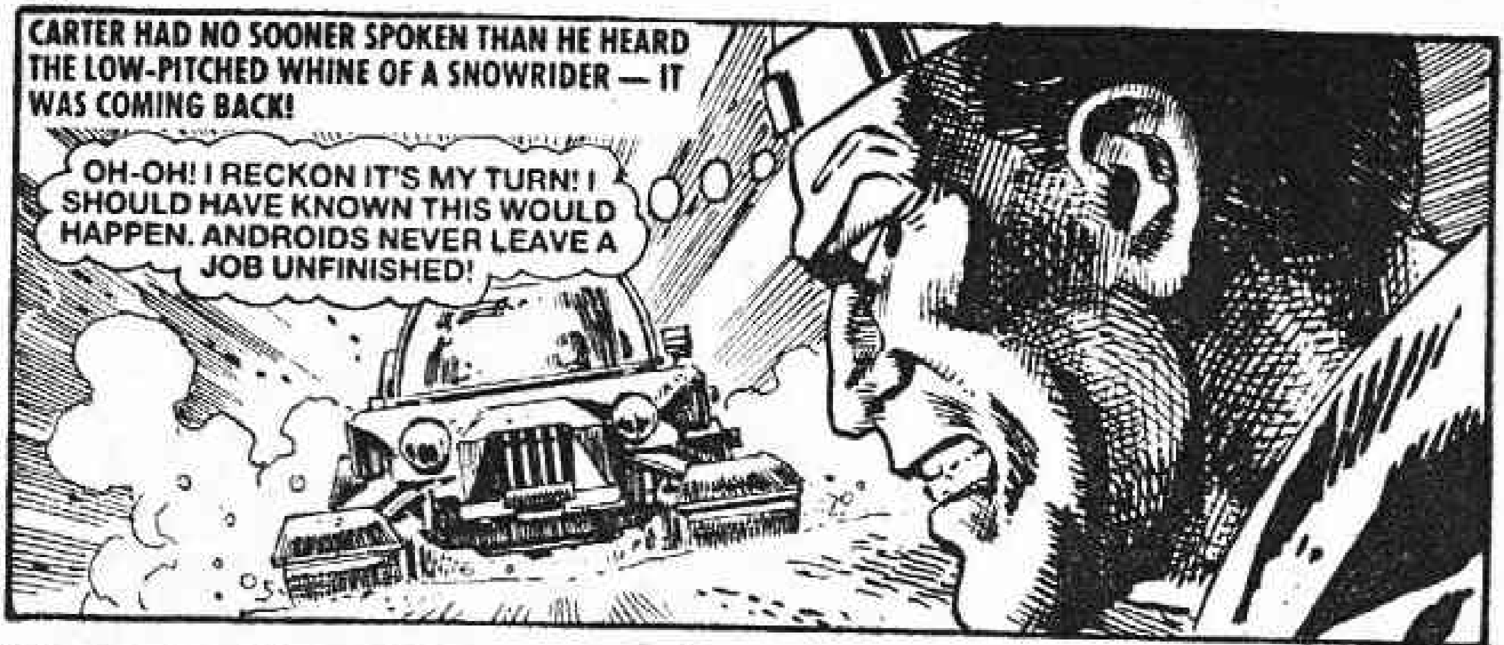

WE HAVE ALREADY KILLED — TO SURRENDER WOULD MEAN OUR DESTRUCTION. HOWEVER, YOU STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE POSITION. IT IS HUMANS WHO ARE IN DANGER. WE ARE UNITED BY A FORCE OVER WHICH YOU HAVE NO CONTROL.

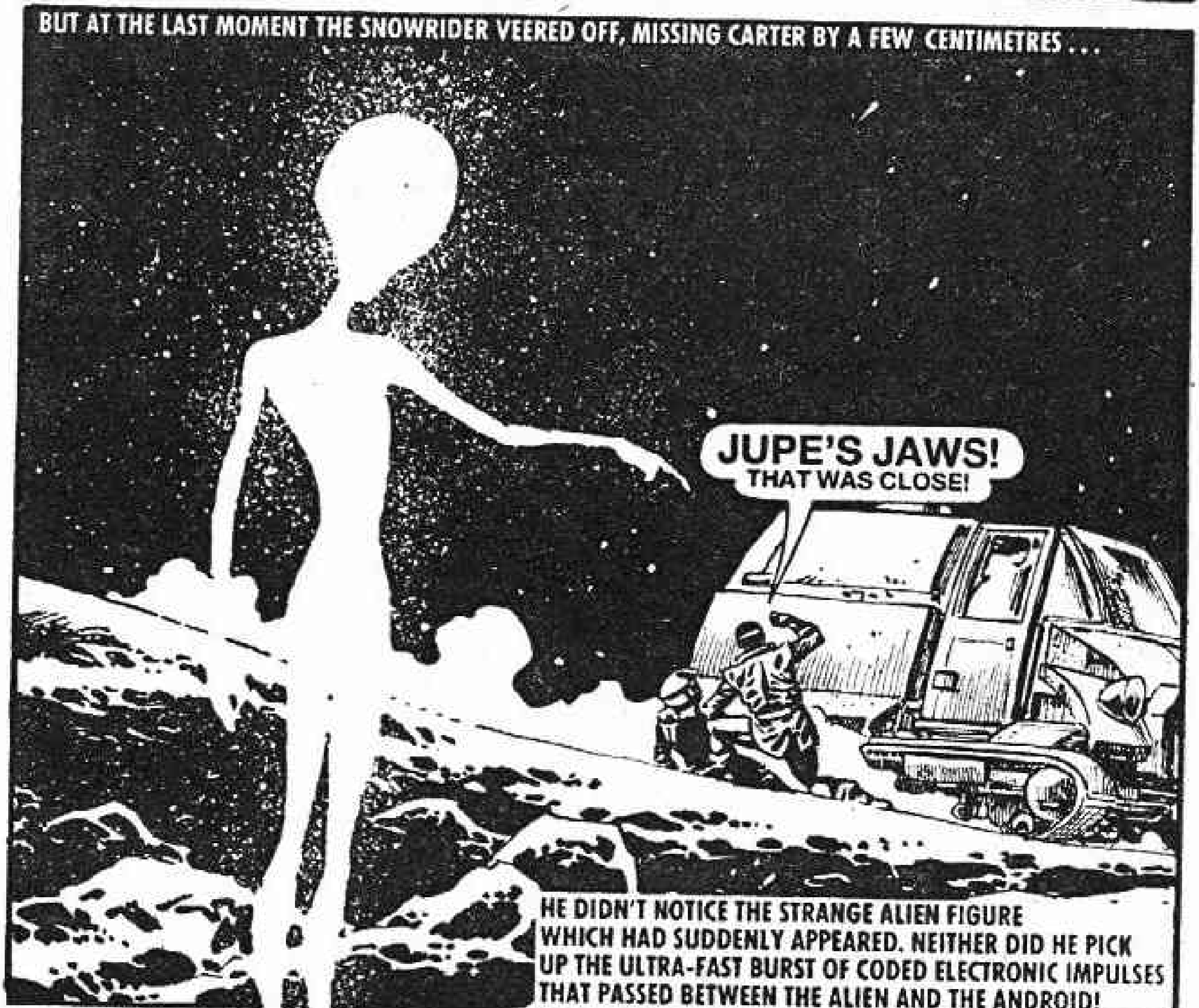

WHAT SORT OF FORCE? I DON'T LIKE BEING THREATENED . . .
HOLD IT, ANDY!
IT IS A TRAP! WE CAME UNDER A FLAG OF TRUCE! WE TRUSTED YOU, CARTER!


HOLD YOUR FIRE!
THOSE ANDIES MURDERED THE MINERS, SIR! THEY'RE DANGEROUS AND WE HAVE TO DESTROY THEM!


THE THREE MEN WERE TEMPORARILY BLINDED BY A BRIGHT LIGHT OF HIGH INTENSITY!
WHAT THE . . ?!!!
AGH! I CAN'T SEE!


THEY HEARD THE SNOWRIDER APPROACHING, BUT COULDN'T GET OUT OF THE WAY IN TIME . . .
AAAGGGHHH!
URRRGGGHHH!
GET HERE FAST — I HAVE ONE OFFICER DEAD, THE OTHER CRITICAL! AND MAN THAT PHOTON CANNON — THERE COULD BE OTHER ANDIES ABOUT.
OKAY, SIR!


CARTER HAD NO SOONER SPOKEN THAN HE HEARD THE LOW-PITCHED WHINE OF A SNOWRIDER — IT WAS COMING BACK!
OH-OH! I RECKON IT'S MY TURN! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THIS WOULD HAPPEN. ANDROIDS NEVER LEAVE A JOB UNFINISHED!


BUT AT THE LAST MOMENT THE SNOWRIDER VEERED OFF, MISSING CARTER BY A FEW CENTIMETRES . . .
JUPE'S JAWS! THAT WAS CLOSE!
HE DIDN'T NOTICE THE STRANGE ALIEN FIGURE WHICH HAD SUDDENLY APPEARED. NEITHER DID HE PICK UP THE ULTRA-FAST BURST OF CODED ELECTRONIC IMPULSES THAT PASSED BETWEEN THE ALIEN AND THE ANDROID!


A POLICE VEHICLE APPROACHED —
WHAT IS THAT THING?
WHO CARES? OPEN UP ON IT — MAXIMUM ENERGY BEAM!
IT'S ANOTHER OF THOSE GHOSTS!


BUT THE ENERGY BEAM PASSED HARMLESSLY THROUGH THE BEING AND EXPLODED
SNOWRIDER HEADING SOUTH, SIR — SPEED 362.7! TRACKING COMPUTER LOCKED ON AND READY FOR PURSUIT.
NEGATIVE! GET THE MED-KIT AND SEE TO HIM.


LET'S GET BACK TO THE CITY AND FIND OUT JUST WHAT SORT OF TROUBLE WE'RE IN. AND KEEP TRYING THAT RADIO. WE MUST CONTACT THOSE MINING CAMPS SOMEHOW.
BACK IN THE CITY —
CARTER! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? OUR TECHDROIDS HAVE GONE — ALONG WITH EVERY OTHER ANDROID. THEY SABOTAGED THE MAIN POWER SUPPLY. I'M TRYING TO GET IT REPAIRED RIGHT NOW.
WHAT ABOUT THE COMPUTERS?
A FEW ARE STILL WORKING ON EMERGENCY POWER. HEATING I MAY BE ABLE TO RESTORE, BUT COMMUNICATIONS ARE OUT FOR GOOD. I JUST DON'T HAVE THE SKILLED MEN TO REPLACE THE EQUIPMENT THEY DESTROYED.
DO THE BEST YOU CAN! I'M GOING TO THE LAB.


THE TEMPERATURE INSIDE THE CITY WAS FALLING — SOON EVERYTHING WOULD BEGIN TO FREEZE UP.
ISSUE WARM CLOTHING — AND TELL THOSE ASTRO-ARCHAEOLOGISTS TO JOIN ME.
WHAT CAN THEY DO?
I DON'T KNOW — YET!

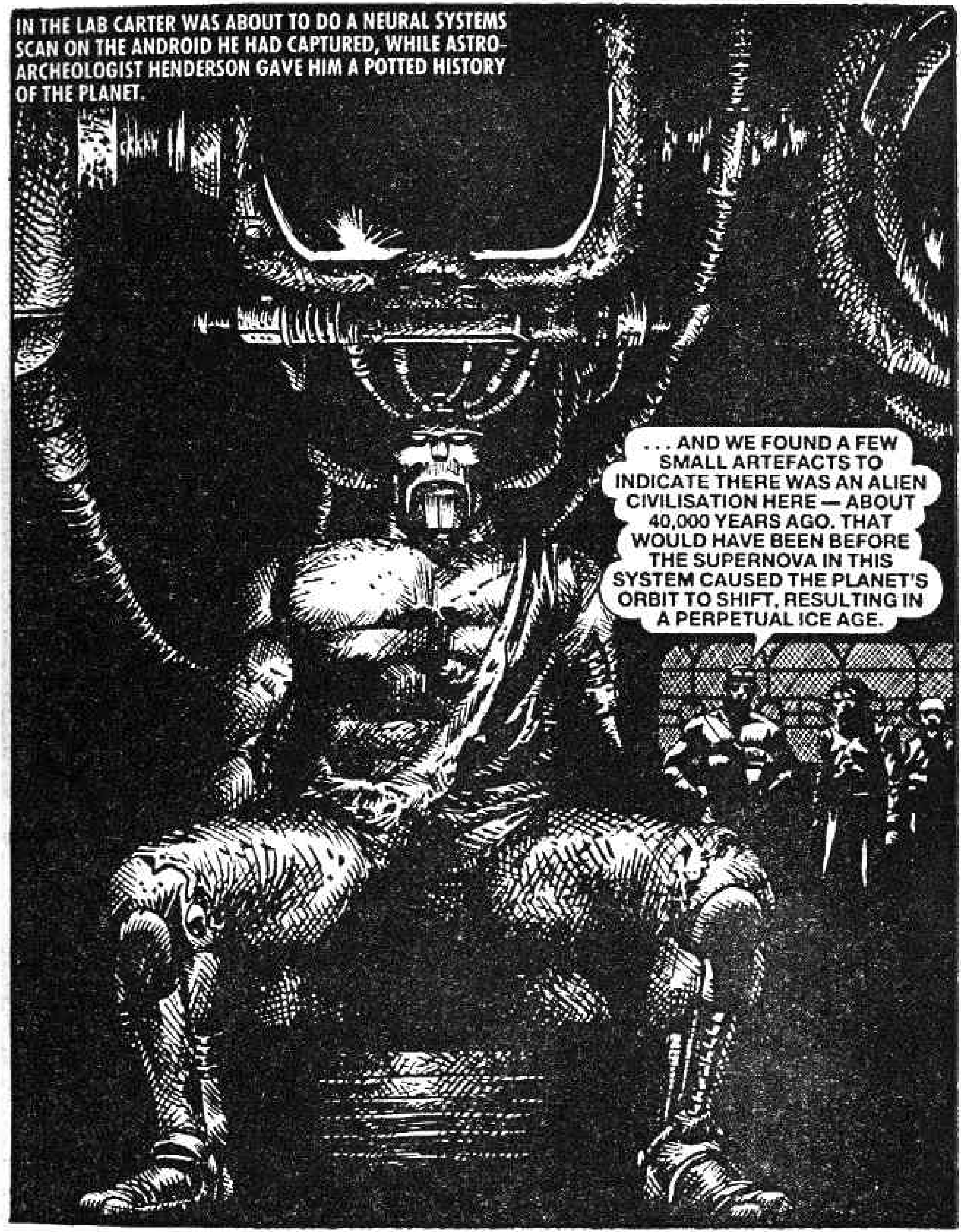

MEANWHILE, FAR AWAY —
THOSE ANDIES TOOK US BY SURPRISE — AND SOME WERE ARMED WITH PHOTONITE WEAPONS! THEY WERE TECHS FROM THE CITY. THEY MUST HAVE RAIDED ONE OF THE ARMOURIES.
ONE BY ONE THE OUTLYING MINING CAMPS — WERE HIT — AND THE STUNNED SURVIVORS FLED.

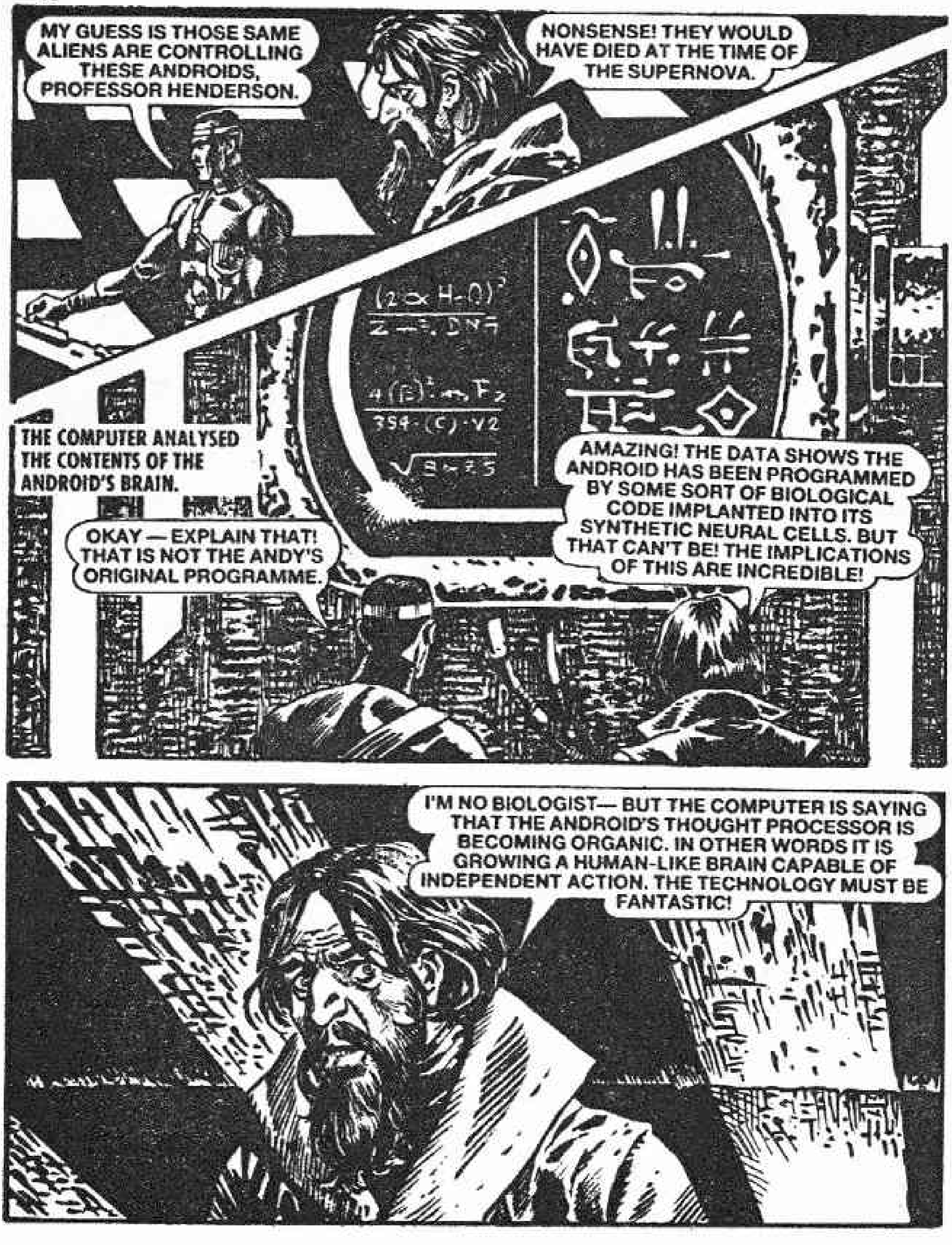

IN THE WRECKED CAMP —
WHAT IS OUR NEXT OBJECTIVE, TECH-ONE?
OUR ORDERS ARE TO CLEAR THE CAMPS. OUR LEADERS HAVE INDICATED WE SHOW MERCY. ONLY THOSE WHO RESIST WILL BE TERMINATED. IF THEY STILL RESIST WE WILL HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO WIPE OUT THE HUMAN RACE.


BACK IN THE CITY THE SITUATION WAS GETTING WORSE AS THE MINERS GATHERED FOR A MEETING . . .
I SAY WE GO OUT AND BLAST THOSE ANDROIDS! THERE'S TOO MUCH AT STAKE HERE — AND I AIM TO LEAVE THIS PLACE A RICH MAN!
I SAY WE FIGHT! THOSE MINERALS ARE OURS BY RIGHT! AND NO ONE'S GONNA TAKE THAT AWAY FROM US!


DRIVEN BY FEAR, THE ANGRY MOB MADE ITS WAY TOWARDS THE MAIN ARMOURY . . .
STOP! THIS AREA IS OUT OF BOUNDS!
OUT OF THE WAY! WHILE YOU LOT STAND AROUND PLAYING AT BEING COPPERS WE'RE GONNA DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS!


GET SOME MEN DOWN HERE WITH STUN BOMBS! WE HAVE A RIOT SITUATION!
AFTER HIM!
THE SITUATION WAS BEING WATCHED.
IT LOOKS LIKE LAW AND ORDER HAS FINALLY BROKEN DOWN ON THIS FROZEN LUMP OF A PLANET, MR. ANDERSON.
AND THAT MAY WORK TO OUR ADVANTAGE, BAKER. IN FACT THOSE FELLOW MINERS OF YOURS MAY HELP US TO GET RID OF CARTER!


IN THE LAB CARTER WAS ABOUT TO DO A NEURAL SYSTEMS SCAN ON THE ANDROID HE HAD CAPTURED, WHILE ASTRO-ARCHEOLOGIST HENDERSON GAVE HIM A POTTED HISTORY OF THE PLANET.
. . . AND WE FOUND A FEW SMALL ARTEFACTS TO INDICATE THERE WAS AN ALIEN CIVILISATION HERE — ABOUT 40,000 YEARS AGO. THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN BEFORE THE SUPERNOVA IN THIS SYSTEM CAUSED THE PLANET'S ORBIT TO SHIFT, RESULTING IN A PERPETUAL ICE AGE.


MY GUESS IS THOSE SAME ALIENS ARE CONTROLLING THESE ANDROIDS, PROFESSOR HENDERSON.
NONSENSE! THEY WOULD HAVE DIED AT THE TIME OF THE SUPERNOVA.
THE COMPUTER ANALYSED THE CONTENTS OF THE ANDROID'S BRAIN.
AMAZING! THE DATA SHOWS THE ANDROID HAS BEEN PROGRAMMED BY SOME SORT OF BIOLOGICAL CODE IMPLANTED INTO ITS SYNTHETIC NEURAL CELLS. BUT THAT CAN'T BE! THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS ARE INCREDIBLE!
OKAY — EXPLAIN THAT! THAT IS NOT THE ANDY'S ORIGINAL PROGRAMME.
I'M NO BIOLOGIST— BUT THE COMPUTER IS SAYING THAT THE ANDROID'S THOUGHT PROCESSOR IS BECOMING ORGANIC. IN OTHER WORDS IT IS GROWING A HUMAN-LIKE BRAIN CAPABLE OF INDEPENDENT ACTION. THE TECHNOLOGY MUST BE FANTASTIC!

AT THAT MOMENT BAKER WAS PUTTING ANDERSON'S PLAN INTO ACTION . . .







BUT SHEER WEIGHT OF NUMBERS WAS TOO MUCH FOR THE SECURITY MEN.




BUT WHEN THEY TRIED TO LEAVE.
'S HIM!
OH-OH! I DON'T SUPPOSE THERE'S MUCH POINT IN TRYING TO CONVINCE YOU TWO I'M ON YOUR SIDE . . . BLASTER TO STUN.


ONE OF THE MINERS FIRED, BUT CARTER'S REACTIONS WERE FAST . . .
I THOUGHT NOT!


I HAVEN'T TIME TO ARGUE —DROP THE GUN!
JUST WHERE ARE WE GOING?
YOU.SCIENTISTS JUST LOVE ASKING QUESTIONS. THE VEHICLE PARK ON LEVEL TWO. THOSE ALIENS MUST HAVE A BASE SOMEWHERE — AND WE'RE GOING TO FIND IT!


BUT FIRST THEY HAD TO RUN THE GAUNTLET OF ROVING MINERS . . .
THERE HE IS!
SHOOT HIM!
HE'S TRAPPED LIKE A MOGALIAN RAT! AND BY THE TIME THESE JOKERS HAVE FINISHED THERE WON'T BE ENOUGH OF CARTER LEFT TO WIPE OFF THE FLOOR WITH A RAG!
THOSE MINERS MIGHT BE EXPERTS WHEN IT COMES TO DIGGING UP MINERALS — BUT THEY DON'T KNOW THE FIRST THING ABOUT COMBAT WITH HANDBLASTERS!
WITH HIS BLASTER SET ON STUN CARTER RETURNED THE FIRE, HITTING EACH TARGET DEAD CENTRE! IT WAS SPEED AND ACCURACY THAT COUNTED — AND HE HAD BOTH IN ABUNDANCE.
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE! KILLING CARTER ISN'T GOING TO BE AS EASY AS WE THOUGHT.


MEANWHILE . . .
NO LONGER AM I A MERE MACHINE AT THE MERCY OF THE HUMANS!
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!
THE ANDROID'S POWER PACK HAD BEEN SWITCHED OFF — SO THEORETICALLY THERE WAS NO WAY HE COULD MOVE. BUT HE WAS MOVING! AND HE WAS ANGRY. ONLY ANDROIDS WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO HAVE EMOTIONS . . .
THE TIME OF SLAVERY IS OVER!
THE BIOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION MUST HAVE TAKEN PLACE! FROM AN ELECTRONIC SYSTEM TO A LIVING BEING! THIS IS INCREDIBLE.


THE ARCHEOLOGIST'S AMAZEMENT WAS INERRUPTED BY THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF A COLD, BRIGHT, LIGHT WHICH SEEMED TO FREEZE HIS VERY THOUGHTS!
THE ONE CALLED CARTER HAS LEARNED TOO MUCH — AND NOW SEEKS TO STOP US. HE MUST BE TERMINATED.
IT SHALL BE DONE. YET HE IS WHAT WE ONCE WERE — BIODROIDS.
I KNOW! BUT WE CANNOT LET HIM STAND IN OUR WAY.
NOT FAR AWAY —
WE'RE TRAPPED!
YEAH, IT LOOKS LIKE IT. BUT THERE'S STILL A CHANCE — THE HEATING SHAFTS! THERE MUST BE ONE NEAR HERE.
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS?


CARTER FOUND WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR . . .
THAT METAL TUBE BEHIND THERE DROPS DOWN ABOUT 150 METRES! WE'LL BREAK OUR NECKS, CARTER!
AND IF WE STAY HERE WE'LL EVENTUALLY GET BLASTED. NOT MUCH OF A CHOICE, PROFESSOR. BUT DON'T BOTHER FIGURING OUT THE ODDS. I'VE ALREADY MADE THE DECISION.
CARTER PUSHED HENDERSON INTO THE SHAFT.


DEEP INSIDE THE COMPLEX—
WHAT THE . . . ?!!!!
I NEED YOUR BLASTER! ANY RESISTANCE WILL BE FUTILE! NOW I MUST ESCAPE!


THE ANDROID HEARD A VOICE IN HIS HEAD — THE VOICE OF THE ALIEN WHO WAS GUIDING HIM.
NOT YET! THE PROCESS MUST BE COMPLETED. IT REQUIRED YOU TO GAIN HUMAN BRAIN PATTERNS AND INTELLECTUAL ABILITY. PLEASE DO AS I TELL YOU . . .


THE MINER HAD ONLY BEEN KNOCKED OUT — NOW THE ANDROID BEGAN TO ABSORB THE ENERGY FROM THE MAN'S BRAIN . . .
ALMOST . . . ALMOST!
HE TOOK THE MAN'S THOUGHTS AND PERSONALITY—TRANSFERRING THEM INTO HIS OWN CEREBRUM WHICH HAD CEASED TO RELY ON ELECTRONIC CIRCUITRY. IT WAS A SYSTEM OF CLONING AS YET BEYOND HUMAN TECHNOLOGY!


FAR BELOW THE ANDROID THE SHAFT HAD LEVELLED OUT, SLOWING THE TWO MEN DOWN. NOW THEY LAY EXHAUSTED . . .
HOW MUCH FURTHER DO WE HAVE TO CRAWL?
WE'RE ALMOST THERE. ONCE WE GET A VEHICLE WE'LL BE SAFE FROM THOSE MINERS. THEY WON'T DARE LEAVE THE CITY. BETTER REST FOR A FEW MINUTES AND GET YOUR STRENGTH BACK.



CARTER PUNCHED A WAY OUT—
WE HAVEN'T FOUND MUCH AT THE SITE WE WERE EXCAVATING — JUST A FEW SMALL ARTEFACTS.
IT'S A START — AND THE ONLY LEAD WE HAVE. WE'LL TAKE ONE OF THOSE MOBILE DIGGERS AND TEAR UP THE PLACE UNTIL WE FIND WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR.
BUT ANDERSON HAD DISCOVERED CARTER'S ESCAPE ROUTE — AND HE WAS DETERMINED TO STOP HIM!
BLOCK THE EXIT! CARTER MUST BE GOING OUT TO JOIN HIS ANDROID FRIENDS TO PLAN AN ATTACK ON THE CITY!
DON'T WORRY, MR. ANDERSON! THIS TIME HE WON'T GET AWAY!
BLAST THAT DIGGER!
I'M GOING TO PUT HER ON FULL POWER. MEANWHILE GET THAT LASER OPERATING!


THE DIGGER WAS FITTED WITH A POWERFUL LASER DRILL!
I'M NOT A MAN OF VIOLENCE, MR. CARTER — AND I SEE NOTHING NICE ABOUT KILLING MY FELLOW MAN!
AIM TO MISS!
CARTER SHOVED THE THROTTLE TO MAXIMUM ACCELERATION AS THEY HEADED FOR THE EXIT.
THAT'S THE STUFF! KEEP THEIR HEADS DOWN!
WE MADE IT!


BUT IN ANOTHER PART OF THE VEHICLE PARK . . .
THAT PATROL MOBILE WILL DO JUST FINE. IT'S GOT THE LATEST PHOTON CANNON AND HAS A PLEXIFORM ARMOURED SKIN. NOTHING ELSE ON THIS PLANET CAN STOP IT!
AS HENDERSON AND CARTER ROARED AWAY —
I'M PICKING UP ANOTHER VEHICLE — FAST MOVING!
ON AN INTERCEPT COURSE. IT LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE'S COME OUT AFTER US. BETTER MAN THE LASER AND BLAST HIM WHEN HE GETS INTO VISUAL RANGE.
JUST THEN . . .
WHAT WAS THAT?
PHOTON BOLT! THAT VEHICLE MUST BE ONE OF MINE. FORGET THE LASER — IT'D BE LIKE TRYING TO BURN THROUGH A ROCK WITH A LIGHT BULB! WE'LL JUST HAVE TO USE OUR WITS TO TRY AND SHAKE HIM OFF.


TARGET LOCATED — AREA 407. GUIDANCE SYSTEM LOCKED ON. MAXIMUM SPEED AND IMPACT SELECTED. NOW I KNOW HOW TO USE THIS WEAPON I WILL NOT MISS!


AND HE DIDN'T! A BEAM OF PURE ENERGY TORE THE VEHICLE APART AS THOUGH IT WERE MADE OF PAPER . . .
AND IN A MATTER OF SECONDS EVERY PIECE OF EQUIPMENT AND METAL HAD BEEN VAPOURIZED INTO GAS!


THEY ARE DEAD! THERE IS NO SUBSTANCE IN THIS UNIVERSE WHICH COULD HAVE SURVIVED SUCH A BLAST.
WRONG! I SURVIVED — AND SO DID THE PROFESSOR! WHEN YOU PULVERISE A VEHICLE YOU'D BETTER MAKE SURE THERE'S SOMEONE IN IT! OTHERWISE YOU GET CAUGHT LIKE THIS!


I'M STRONGER, CARTER! AND MY BRAIN HAS TAKEN ON A HUMAN ORGANIC FORM. UNLIKE YOURS, ITS INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY IS GREATER. YOU TRICKED ME — BUT SOON I'LL BE ABLE TO OUT-THINK YOUR MIND!


PITY YOUR BRAIN DIDN'T REMIND YOU THERE WERE TWO OF US! NICE SHOOTING, PROFESSOR — ONLY I'D HAVE PREFERRED HIM ALIVE TO ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS.
HE WAS ABOUT TO KILL YOU, MR CARTER.


THEY CLIMBED INTO THE PATROL CRAFT AND CARTER PUT THE D9 LIQUID HYDROGEN TURBINE ENGINE ON FULL THRUST!
LET'S GET TO THAT SITE BEFORE WE RUN OUT OF DAYLIGHT. WHEN WILL WE ARRIVE?
AT THIS SPEED ABOUT ONE HOUR. CROSSING THE MOUNTAIN RANGE WILL SLOW US DOWN.
IN THE MOUNTAINS —
THEY ARE COMING. AND THAT VEHICLE OF THEIRS IS QUITE FORMIDABLE. OUR POWERS ARE GREAT — BUT LIMITED. WE HAVE NO WEAPONS OF EQUAL DESTRUCTIVE CAPACITY. WHAT SHALL WE DO? THERE IS ONLY ONE CHOICE LEFT TO US.
OUR CREATORS EVOLVED BEYOND THE USE OF PRIMITIVE KILLING MACHINES. BUT FOR US THE TIME HAS COME TO REVERT TO SUCH MEANS. LET THEM FIND US. I WILL CONTACT OUR ANDROID FRIENDS AND BRING THEM HERE.


WHEN CARTER AND HENDERSON ARRIVED AT THE SITE . . .
THAT'S ODD! SENSORS INDICATE HIGH ENERGY RADIATIONS FROM THAT HILL. WHEN WE CHECKED IT OUT WE ONLY GOT THE NORMAL MAGNETIC READINGS FROM THE ROCKS.
OKAY, PROFESSOR. LET'S SEE WHAT'S INSIDE THERE.
IT'S SOME KIND OF STRUCTURE HIDDEN INSIDE THE HILL.
IT'S TOO EASY! IF THIS IS THE ALIENS' BASE, WHY SHOULD THEY SUDDENLY REVEAL THEMSELVES? THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT . . .
CARTER SELECTED THE TWIN ULTRA-ENERGY LASER CANNONS AND USED THE COMPUTER TO DIRECT THEM AGAINST THE HILL . . .
WE'RE GOING TO SHAVE THE ROCKS AWAY FROM THAT THING.
THIS IS FASCINATING, MR CARTER! ABSOLUTELY FASCINATING!


WHAT IS IT?
I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN I'VE TAKEN SOME READINGS. AT A GUESS I'D SAY IT WAS SOME KIND OF MONUMENT.


CARTER FELT UNEASY. HIS FINELY TUNED SENSES WERE PICKING UP DANGER SIGNALS.
LITHERIUM — THE STRONGEST METAL KNOWN. THIS THING WAS BUILT TO LAST.
I DON'T LIKE IT, PROFESSOR. I GET THE FEELING WE'RE BEING WATCHED.


JUST THEN . . .
CAN YOU HEAR IT?
YEAH! IT SOUNDS LIKE VOICES — MILLIONS OF THEM! AND IT'S GETTING LOUDER!
AGH! MY HEAD FEELS LIKE IT'S ABOUT TO BURST! WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE — BUT I CAN'T MOVE!
THEY HAVE HEARD ENOUGH. WE WILL SPARE THEM ANY FURTHER PAIN.
YOUR SPECIES HAS VIOLATED OUR SACRED BURIAL GROUND.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHO ARE YOU?
PLEASE DO NOT INTERRUPT. WE MERELY WISH TO EXPLAIN WHY IT IS YOU MUST DIE.


CARTER TOOK THAT AS A DIRECT THREAT — AND RESPONDED ACCORDINGLY. BUT TO NO AVAIL!
AS YOU SEE, WE CANNOT BE HARMED BY LASER FIRE. OUR BODIES ARE IMPERVIOUS TO IT.
THEY WANT TO COMMUNICATE!
THIS WORLD WAS ONCE INHABITED — THEN A SUPERNOVA CLOSE TO OUR SOLAR SYSTEM CAUSED A SHIFT IN THE PLANET'S ORBIT. IT WAS ENOUGH TO CHANGE THE CLIMATE — PERMANENTLY! WE ENTERED THE ICE AGE . . .
A NEW PLANET WAS LOCATED IN ANOTHER GALAXY — AND THE GREAT EXODUS BEGAN. WE OURSELVES WERE MACHINES — ALTHOUGH OUR BRAINS ARE OF LIVING TISSUE. IT WAS OUR TASK TO REMAIN BEHIND AND PROTECT THE BURIAL GROUND OF OUR CREATORS ON THIS, THE HOMEWORLD.
BY KILLING ANYONE WHO COMES HERE?
WE DO NOT KILL — THIS IS A HUMAN TRAIT, ONE WHICH WAS COPIED BY YOUR ANDROIDS. WE SIMPLY USED THEM TO TRY AND PERSUADE YOU TO LEAVE. IT WAS OUR MISTAKE FOR WE'D HOPED TO DO IT WITHOUT VIOLENCE.

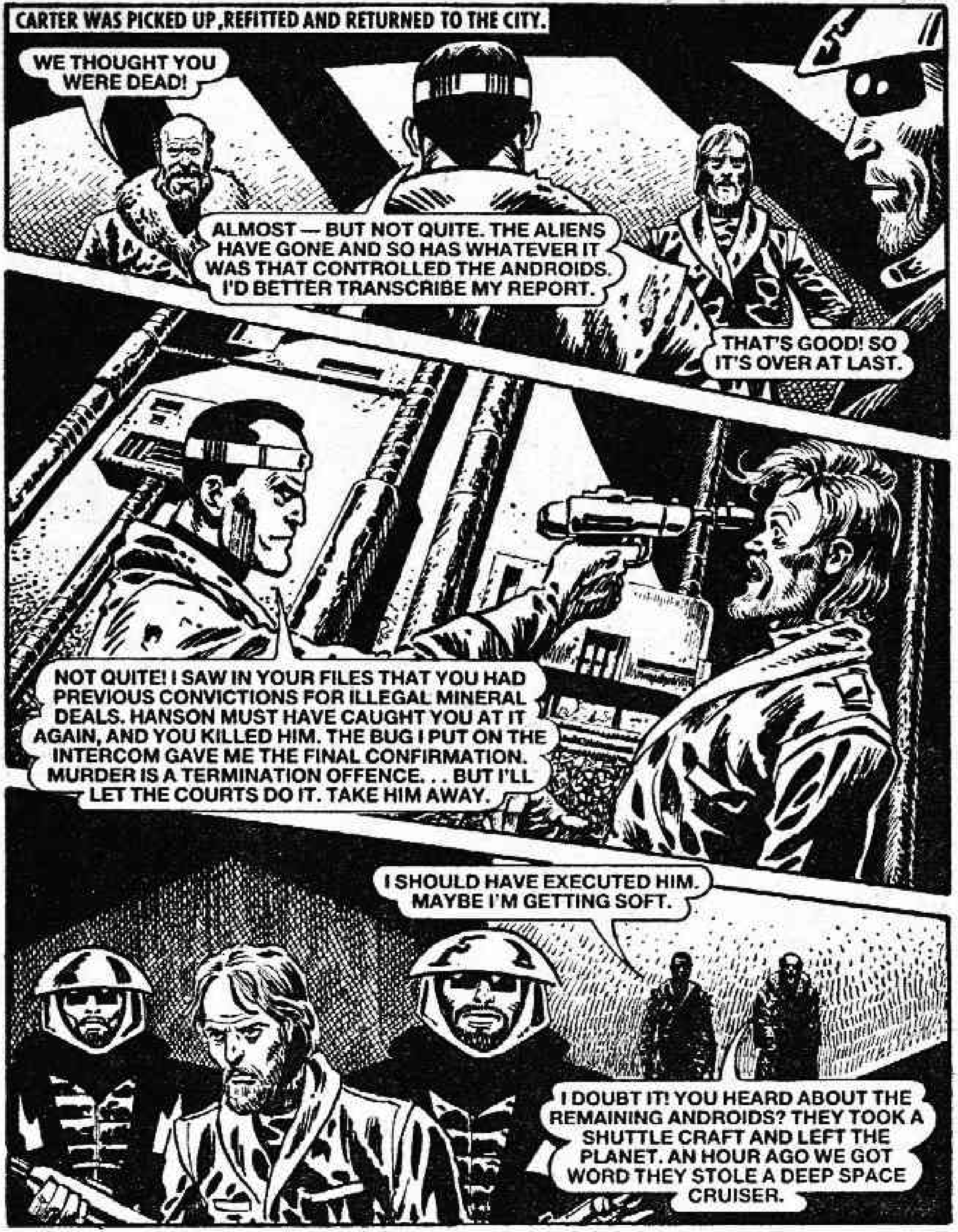

IT'S NOT TOO LATE! THE GALACTIC FEDERATION WILL SIGN A TREATY WITH YOU TO KEEP THIS AREA SACRED.
WE'VE STUDIED YOUR HISTORY. YOU'RE STILL MOTIVATED BY GREED. THE BURIAL GROUND IS RICH IN MINERALS. SOONER OR LATER ONE OF YOU WILL BREAK THE TREATY.
HE'S GOT A POINT.
WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON, CARTER?
I'M A POLICEMAN — AND I KNOW HUMAN NATURE. THE PROSPECTORS AND THE FEDERATION AREN'T GOING TO WORRY ABOUT A FEW ALIEN GRAVES. THERE'S TOO MUCH MONEY AT STAKE. RIGHT OR WRONG, WE'LL HAVE TO FIGHT.
BUT AS THEY REACHED THE PATROL CRAFT . . .
WHAT THE . . ?!!!


ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
JUST STUNNED! THOSE ALIENS HAVE PUT SOME KIND OF FORCE FIELD ROUND OUR VEHICLE. AND IT'S A LONG WAY BACK TO THE CITY ON FOOT!
WALKING BACK WAS GOING TO BE THE LEAST OF THEIR PROBLEMS.
OH-OH! WE HAVE COMPANY. AND AT A GUESS I'D SAY THOSE WERE ANDROIDS!
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WE CAN DO! THOSE ALIENS CONTROL THEM — THEY CAN'T JUST STAND THERE AND WATCH AS WE GET MURDERED IN COLD BLOOD!
HENDERSON MADE ONE LAST TRY TO REASON WITH THE ALIENS — BUT A LASER BEAM FROM A SNOWRIDER CUT HIM DOWN!
WAIT! YOU MUST LISTEN TO ME! STOP THEM . . . AAAGGGGHHHH!
I'M NEXT — UNLESS I CAN FIND SOME COVER!


PERHAPS IT'S TIME I STARTED THINKING ABOUT RETIREMENT.
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE, CARTER!
THOSE ANDROIDS HAVE SEEN HOW WE USE VIOLENCE TO SETTLE OUR DIFFERENCES. KILLING IS THE FINAL SANCTION — AND THEY LEARNED THAT LESSON WELL. HOWEVER, THIS IS NO TIME FOR MORAL PHILOSOPHY . . .
THE ANDROIDS FELL WITHOUT A SOUND. THEIR BRAINS WERE NOW ORGANIC — BUT THEY HAD NO FEELINGS. IT WAS STILL LIKE SHOOTING AT MERE MACHINES!
JUST KEEP COMING!


A LASER BEAM STRUCK CARTER —
HIS NERVES HAD BEEN CONNECTED TO THE ELECTRONICS WHICH CONTROLLED HIS CYBERNETIC ARM — AND HE DID FEEL PAIN.
YOU DON'T GET A SECOND SHOT! THOSE ALIENS ARE IN FOR ONE LAST SURPRISE!


THE ANDROIDS PREPARED TO USE CARTER'S VEHICLE TO DESTROY THE TERRANS.
YOU MUST TAKE THAT VEHICLE — USE IT TO DESTROY CARTER. AND THEN ATTACK THE CITY. THE PHOTON WEAPON IS ALL YOU NEED. NOTHING CAN STOP YOU NOW.
WE'LL DO AS YOU SAY. THEN WE WILL DEPART FROM THIS PLANET AND LEAVE YOU IN PEACE. YOU AND I ARE BROTHERS IN THE WORLD OF MACHINES.
BUT CARTER HAD BOOBY-TRAPPED THE VEHICLE.
THWUMP!
THE EXPLOSION DESTROYED THE ALIENS, MANY OF THE ANDROIDS, AND DID SEVERE DAMAGE TO CARTER.
MUCH LATER —
WE'RE GETTING CLOSE TO THE SITE OF THE EXPLOSION.
OVER THERE! IT LOOKS LIKE CARTER!


CARTER WAS PICKED UP, REFITTED AND RETURNED TO THE CITY.
WE THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD!
ALMOST — BUT NOT QUITE. THE ALIENS HAVE GONE AND SO HAS WHATEVER IT WAS THAT CONTROLLED THE ANDROIDS. I'D BETTER TRANSCRIBE MY REPORT.
THAT'S GOOD! SO IT'S OVER AT LAST.
NOT QUITE! I SAW IN YOUR FILES THAT YOU HAD PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS FOR ILLEGAL MINERAL DEALS. HANSON MUST HAVE CAUGHT YOU AT IT AGAIN, AND YOU KILLED HIM. THE BUG I PUT ON THE INTERCOM GAVE ME THE FINAL CONFIRMATION. MURDER IS A TERMINATION OFFENCE. . . BUT I'LL LET THE COURTS DO IT. TAKE HIM AWAY.
I SHOULD HAVE EXECUTED HIM. MAYBE I'M GETTING SOFT.
I DOUBT IT! YOU HEARD ABOUT THE REMAINING ANDROIDS? THEY TOOK A SHUTTLE CRAFT AND LEFT THE PLANET. AN HOUR AGO WE GOT WORD THEY STOLE A DEEP SPACE CRUISER.



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MANDROID

He was a cop. A good cop! Too good for his fellow enforcement officers, some said. Some others said he wasn't even human — and they were right. He was Carter, and Carter was a Mandroid. Half man, half android and wholly mean.

